
Regional Council Activity Report

September 29, 2004



Executive Director's Report

In the final days before the November 2, 2004 General Election, a flurry of activity has occurred involving the opponents of Proposition 400. They are urging that Proposition 400 be turned down. The opponents want new legislation calling for a new election to approve a one-half cent sales tax and a transportation plan other than the one approved by MAG. On October 4, 2004, the General Counsel for the Arizona Legislative Council issued an opinion (R-46-125) clarifying MAG's authority to develop the Plan. Here are the highlights of the opinion:

- To receive federal funding for the projects, the state must comply with the federal planning requirements.
- A legislatively developed plan would be contrary to these requirements, because the transportation plan must be cooperatively developed and approved by the Metropolitan Planning Organization.
- If a transportation plan is developed contrary to the federal requirements, the Secretary of Transportation can refuse to approve projects and deny federal funding.
- The Legislature probably could not appropriate federal monies provided for transportation projects.
- A state-funded project would require a conformity determination that would have to be made by MAG.

Even with MAG's authority clearly stated, we still have several challenges in 2005, both in air quality and transportation, to keep transportation projects flowing smoothly for this region.

The most immediate challenge is to have the current Regional Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program meet the new Eight Hour Ozone conformity requirements. This must be done by June 15, 2005, in order for this region not to go into a lapse.

The next challenge is to develop the new five-year Transportation Improvement Program that reflects the phasing of the projects in the Regional Transportation Plan. Our current Program expires on December 9, 2005. The new Program must be in place and approved by that time since an expired Program can also cause a lapse.

It is important that we stay the course and meet these important dates. Not meeting air quality requirements can have severe consequences. If this region goes into a lapse, transportation projects not under contract would be stopped, including freeway and arterial street projects. This is what happened to Atlanta. We do not want to be in this predicament.

In the brief months ahead, I am confident that by working together we can meet the challenges and keep this region moving.



Action Items

Regional Council Meeting Report for Wednesday, September 29, 2004

Census Survey Oversight Subcommittee Approved

The MAG Regional Council approved the establishment of a 2005 Census Survey Oversight Subcommittee to provide policy-level advice on issues related to the 2005 Census Survey. The subcommittee will report to the Management Committee and every MAG member agency is forwarding the name of a management representative who will serve on the subcommittee.

The role of the new subcommittee will be to develop and implement strategies to obtain a successful survey of population in households and a full count of persons in group quarters and outdoor locations (homeless) in the region; collaborate on survey preparations to achieve economies of scale; coordinate municipal participation in the media campaign to increase public awareness and enhance prospects of a good response; set direction for the various municipal departments such as planning, public information, and human services; and provide regular updates to the MAG Management Committee and Regional Council.

The census survey is estimated to cost \$7.5 million and will be conducted beginning September 1, 2005. The survey is designed to serve as a mid-decade update to the 2000 Census to more accurately reflect the region's burgeoning population. Accuracy is critical to cities because state-shared revenues are distributed based on population.

For more information, please contact Heidi Pahl, MAG 2005 Census Survey Coordinator, (602) 254-6300.

9-1-1 Funding Request Approved

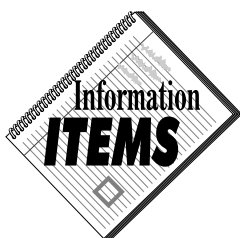
The MAG Regional Council approved a request for funding for maintenance and operation of the Regional 9-1-1 system. Each year, Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) managers submit inventory and upgrade requests that are used to develop a five-year equipment program that forecasts future 9-1-1 equipment needs of the region. The request for funding the equipment upgrades and operating system for fiscal year 2006 totaled \$7.8 million.

For more information, please contact Susan MacFarlane, 9-1-1 Administrator, Phoenix Fire Department, (602) 262-4433.

Gilbert Pedestrian Project Approved

The MAG Regional Council approved spending \$80,000 in air quality funds to provide funding to the Town of Gilbert for design assistance for a project in the Gilbert Heritage District. The project, which is part of the Pedestrian Design Assistance Program Round II, will help create a pathway to the downtown transit center. The funds became available through the FY 2003 MAG Federal Funds Interim Closeout Process.

For more information, please contact Maureen DeCindis, MAG Transportation Planner, (602) 254-6300.



Information Items

MAG Holds Press Conference on Domestic Violence Awareness

Every 36 minutes in Maricopa County, a child witnesses domestic violence. Every five minutes in this region, police respond to a domestic violence call. Every 19 minutes in our state, an arrest is made as a result of a domestic violence incident. Every 480 minutes in our nation, a woman is murdered by an intimate partner.

There's not a minute to lose, and during a press conference September 30, the MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council urged Valley residents to use that minute to learn more about what they can do to stop domestic violence. More than 60 people attended the event, which was covered by all of the major television, radio, and print media.

The press conference was timed to last 36 minutes to highlight the statistic regarding children. Every five minutes law officers in the room stood to emphasize how often they must respond to a domestic violence call.

During the news conference, Chandler Vice Mayor Phillip Westbrook, Chair of the Domestic Violence Council, released the Council's Five-Year Report Card outlining the 41 initiatives in the Council's Regional Domestic Violence Plan and the innovative steps that have been taken toward their implementation over the past five years.

Since 1999, the MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council has been working to end domestic violence in Maricopa County. The Council has been a catalyst for increased awareness, education, collaboration, and change – all of which are needed to stop the violence. To access crisis information on shelters and services, to learn more about how to implement workplace policies, to sign up as a volunteer, or to access resources, visit the Council's Web site at www.mag.maricopa.gov/dv.

For more information, please contact Debbra Determan, MAG Human Services Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Dust Control Efforts Continue

At its July meeting, the Regional Council received information regarding the importance of stepping up efforts to combat dust in the region. An update was provided by Maricopa County regarding those efforts. Since its last report, the County has authorized hiring additional inspectors to enforce the Maricopa County Fugitive Dust Control Rules, and the City of Phoenix has worked with Maricopa County to control dust at the 43rd Avenue site. Meetings have also been held with representatives from the agriculture industry to solicit their assistance in reducing particulate pollution.

For more information please contact Lindy Bauer, MAG Environmental Director, (602) 254-6300.

West Nile Virus Epidemic Winding Down

Maricopa County Environmental Director Al Brown reported that the West Nile Virus epidemic appears to be almost over. The County reported that from an estimated 25,000 infections during the crisis, 180 individuals suffered some form of neuroinvasive disease. Statewide, eight people have died from the virus, seven of them in Maricopa County.

The County reported it has scaled back its fogging efforts, from about 40,000 acres per night to 20,000. Fogging is only done if complaints are received, if a high number of Culex mosquitoes are identified, or if mosquitoes in traps test positive for the virus. During the crisis, more than 5,000 mosquito complaints were received and responded to by the County. The number of complaints involving green pools, a common breeding ground for mosquitoes, topped 1,000.

Public involvement efforts continue, with presentations being given at a number of community events across the region. Residents are asked to continue to check for standing water and to take steps to protect themselves from mosquito bites. The County will continue to prepare for next year's mosquito breeding season, with an Ad Hoc Advisory Group to meet this winter. It remains unclear if this year's virus should be considered the presenting year or the peak year. If it is the peak year, the risk would be lower the following season. If it is the presenting year, next summer's epidemic would be worse than this year's crisis.

For more information, please contact Kelly Taft, MAG Communications Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Regional Arts and Culture Partnership

The Maricopa Regional Arts and Culture Task Force was formed in June 2003 to help advance arts and culture as an important component of technology-based economic development efforts in the region. A presentation was given to the Regional Council by Jack Pfister, trustee of the Flinn Foundation. He recommended creating a Regional Arts and Culture Partnership that will provide a focal point for arts and culture in the region. The structure would be similar to the Greater Phoenix Economic Council and incorporated as a 501(c)3.

For more information about the Maricopa Regional Arts and Culture Task Force, see www.flinn.org or www.pipertrust.org, or call (602) 744-6809.

Response to Survey

Thanks to all who returned last month's survey regarding the publication of this document, the Regional Council Activity Report. The survey was designed to determine whether MAG should continue to publish this report and to elicit suggestions or comments. We had approximately 20 surveys returned. Ninety percent of respondents reported finding this report informative or useful. Another 90 percent reported reading it every month. The vote was split on how the document should be distributed, with 55 percent voting in favor of e-mail, 35 percent in favor of direct mail, five percent recommended posting on the Web, and five percent in favor of discontinuing the document. MAG staff will explore a potential mix of options for future distribution.

For more information, please contact Kelly Taft, MAG Communications Manager, (602) 254-6300.



Upcoming Events

MAG to Host Booths at Upcoming Events

The Maricopa Association of Governments, in conjunction with the Arizona Department of Transportation and Valley Metro, will host several booths at special events around the region. Events will include the Arizona State Fair October 16-17 at the state fairgrounds, and the Boeing Commuter Fair October 20 at the Boeing headquarters in Mesa.

For more information, please contact Jason Stephens, Public Involvement Planner, (602) 254-6300.

Next Regional Council Meeting

The October meeting of the MAG Regional Council has been cancelled. No meeting is scheduled in November. The next meeting of the MAG Regional Council will be held on Wednesday, December 15, 2004 at the MAG offices, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Suite 200, Phoenix. Agenda items are pending.

For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.